

## **FEARLESS FAITH IN PERILOUS TIMES**

### **Background:**

I have been struggling with this thought all week!

How did Judah, the chosen people of GOD end up being, conquered and hauled away to Babylon? How did they get to this point where GOD seems to have abandoned them?

They surely abandoned GOD!

They knew better, but yet they broke all the Commandments!

Their priests did not hold true to the teachings of GOD. They lied to the people.

The people engaged in wickedness on every level! They satisfied every carnal lust for sex, violence, debauchery, they worshipped false gods and idols, they set up asherah poles, they consulted mediums and sooth-sayers, they worshipped and consulted with the dead, they practised abortion and human sacrifices (even of children), they turned GOD's holy house into a den of thieves selling widows and orphans instead of caring for them as GOD decreed.

**"HE said to them, "It is written, MY house will be called a house of prayer, but you are making it a den of thieves!"**" Matthew 21: 13

**"Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world."** James 1: 27

They ignored the plea of GOD, "Return! Return to ME!" **"Ever since the time of your ancestors you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you," says the LORD Almighty. "But you ask, 'How are we to return?'"** Malachi 3:7

And so God's chosen people went on ignoring GOD, and the Babylonians conquered them, and led them off through the dessert and tough terrain. Stripped of everything, their homes, possessions, families. Stripped naked and bound in heavy chains, being now esteemed as nothing more than chattel.

The Babylonians did not consider them as human, their life had no value. They were going to erase these people, their religion and their history from existence.

As they tramped along the difficult road, burdened with their heavy chains, hungry and thirsty, some of them dying along the way, they must have realized that GOD was rebuking them. Yet they did not call out to HIM. **"Pour out Your wrath on the nations that do not acknowledge YOU, on the peoples who do not call on Your Name. For they have devoured Jacob; they have devoured him completely and destroyed his homeland."** Jeremiah 10: 24 & 25

**"They sat by the rivers of Babylon and wept for what they had lost, but they did not call out for GOD! "By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion."** Psalm 137:1

But Nehemiah, the cup-bearer, prayed. And GOD granted him the cry of his heart and so the walls of Jerusalem were restored. **"When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven."** Nehemiah 1: 4

**"but I said to the king, "May the king live forever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my ancestors are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire? The king said to me, "What is it you want?"...And may I have a letter to Asaph, keeper of the royal park, so he will give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel by the temple and for the city wall and for the residence I will occupy?" And because the gracious hand of my God was on me, the king granted my requests."** Nehemiah 2: 3, 4 & 8

Where is your anguish? Where is your heart? Is your heart broken for the things that break God's heart? Are you praying for the delight of GOD? Are you praying for the things that will bring GOD joy? Are you praying for the lost?

Or are you beautiful Notre Dame has burned down!" And who is caring about the souls that are headed for eternal flames? Are you praying for them?

This is what I fear, that there will be many suffering eternally (**"And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."** Matthew 25:30) because the people of GOD are asleep, because they are not seeking GOD's pleasure, because they are buried in compromise.

Where is your anguish? Where is the urgency of your prayers? Are you trifling with the world and it's cares, or are you seeking and praying for the things that GOD desires?

Oh GOD! Wake me up!!!! Light the fire in my soul again!!!! Revive me!!!!!!

**"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not be conformed to the**

***pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—HIS good, pleasing and perfect will.***” Romans 12: 1 & 2

My friends, look at what is going on today. It is the same thing Daniel and his 3 brave friends faced long ago. Listen to today's text:

**Text:**

“King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, sixty cubits (90 feet) high and six cubits wide, and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. He then summoned the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials to come to the dedication of the image he had set up. So the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials assembled for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up, and they stood before it. Then the herald loudly proclaimed, “Nations and peoples of every language, this is what you are commanded to do: As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.” Therefore, as soon as they heard the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp and all kinds of music, all the nations and peoples of every language fell down and worshiped the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

At this time some astrologers came forward and denounced the Jews. They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “May the king live forever! Your Majesty has issued a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music must fall down and worship the image of gold, and that whoever does not fall down and worship will be thrown into a blazing furnace. But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up.”

Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king, **14** and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?”

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, “King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”

Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace. So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace. The king's command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace.

Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, “Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?” They replied, “Certainly, Your Majesty.” He said, “Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods.”

Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, “Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!”

So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire, and the satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.

Then Nebuchadnezzar said, “Praise be to the GOD of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in HIM and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own GOD. Therefore I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the GOD of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way.”

Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the province of Babylon.” Daniel Chapter 3

**The Hook:**

Let's understand this. Daniel and his 3 friends, young men, boys likely about 14 or 15 years of age, were some 1,500 miles from home in exile and bondage. They had lost everything, they even lost their names. Their masters had even changed their names.

Daniel (God is my judge) had become Belteshazzar (the god Bel protects my life)  
Hananiah (God is gracious) had become Shadrach (the inspiration of the sun/the common of Aku)  
Mishael (who is like God) had become Meshach (the Babalonian god of Aku)  
Azariah (God helps) had become Abed Nego (the servant of the god Nebo)

It seems this name changing was a deliberate smear campaign to alienate them from the true Lordship of GOD. It was a deliberate attempt to conform them to the Babylonian world view and erase their attachment to their own nation, people, religion and GOD. It was an attempt to erase it all from history!! Just as today there is a movement afoot to do the same to the faithful of GOD.

This plan of re-indoctrination and re-education had worked, for of all the thousands taken out of Jerusalem, this account tells us only these 4 young men stood up against Nebuchanezzar, the king of Babylon.

If you read Daniel 2: 31-45 (see Post Notes), it seems that Nebuchanezzar was not far from the kingdom of GOD because he had had a dream, and Daniel interpreted it. At that time Nebuchanezzar confessed to Daniel that "The king said to Daniel, "Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery.'" Daniel 2: 47

Nebuchanezzar acknowledged that Jehova GOD was the greatest of gods and a great interpreter of secrets, yet, a short time later he sets up a huge idol and persecutes to death all those who do not worship it. Indeed he turned his blessing into a curse, and made the image of his dream the pattern for his idol for the nation to worship.

The king of Babylon, Nebuchanezzar, was an absolute ruler. His will was law. No man dared to dispute him. How could you, when he could throw you into a fiery furnace, chop you into pieces or turn your home into a dung hill on a whim!

So he sets up this 90 foot tall golden statue and makes himself a god! He gathers all the princes and potentates of his kingdom together to worship this idol of his image.

It seems strange that no-one questioned him. No-one stood up to him, except these 3 Hebrew slave boys. The same boys who earlier refused to obey his command to eat meat (see Post Notes Daniel 1:11-19) and after only 10 days appeared healthier and more robust than all the other young men who ate freely of the king's best delicacies.

Having stood firm in their faith before, they were bolder to face this more terrible ordeal. The king had favoured them and expected them to do his bidding, but they stood firm in the faith.

Friends, 13 times their names appear in this chapter, like the refrain of a song about faith and valour. As Hudson Taylor has said, "Christ is either Lord of all, or HE is not Lord at all."

### The Book I:

### The Possible Excuses

1. It is useless to resist, this king has too much power
2. We can succumb unwillingly, who could blame us, look at the risks.
3. He is the king and we should obey his royal decree
4. We are in a strange land, far from home. Who will notice?
5. Everyone else in the kingdom is doing it, so it must be right.
6. Who are we to go against the local customs and laws? When in Babylon, do as the Babylonians do.

Ofcourse, at home, they would never have considered doing such a thing. They would remember "***I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. "You shall have no other gods before ME." Exodus 20: 2 & 3 and "You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate ME."*** Deuteronomy 5: 8 & 9

7. Perhaps this is not a religious act, it is merely symbolical, representing homage to the local king.

When the morning came, and the strains of music called all the people in Persia to come, they all bowed down. Persian leaders and men of authority, those who loved the king, and those who hated him, merchants and towns people, Jews and Gentiles, those who believed in worship of idols and even those who did not. Everyone bowed down as commanded. Everyone but these 3 young men!!!!

So I challenge you, and myself, all of us, to cultivate a brave personality.

In the service of GOD, we must be like these young men. We can not rely on the counting of heads, or the example of other men/women. We must follow The Lord's will wherever it leads us. Even if we must go alone!!!!

Friends, hear me clearly! Adam ate the fruit, Esau ate the porridge. One temptation in life leads to life-long loss.

Let it be known that to follow Christ is better. It is better than anything else. Make no exception!! I will follow Christ, The Lamb of God, wherever HE goes, even if I die doing so.

***“These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they remained virgins. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among mankind and offered as first fruits to God and the Lamb.”*** Revelation 14:4

## **The Book II**

## **The Prevailing Conviction**

Friends, beware! False religion does not hesitate to use force!

These young men had solid faith! They were absolutely aligned with GOD!

First they said, “We have no need to defend ourselves”. Daniel 3: 16. “No need” is translated in other versions as “careful”, in other words, we don’t need to be full of care, worried, about defending ourselves against you.

So, even though they did answer carefully, with wisdom, they were not anxious about the outcome. They were not in the least bit worried. They were not intimidated. They did not need to weigh the options. They did not hesitate. They knew exactly what they were going to say and what they were going to do. They spoke and acted with confidence, treating Nebuchanezzar as a man, not a king.

Secondly, they did not feel it their place to answer at all! ***“We have no need to answer you. Our GOD can save us from the burning, fiery furnace and deliver us from your hand”***, (Daniel 3: 17) they said with certainty.

In other words, It is not us who will answer you. You have challenged GOD Most High. GOD Himself will answer you.

***“Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.”*** Jeremiah 33:3

Friends, If you are following the will of GOD, it is GOD’s affair to see you through! ***“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,”*** Psalm 46: 1 & 2

Yes, our GOD, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning, fiery furnace! HE can do ANYTHING!!!! ***“Now to HIM who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to HIS power that is at work within us,”*** Ephesians 3:20

These 3 young men avowed (affirmed) their faith in the Omnipotent GOD knowing that no man, however mighty, no furnace, no matter how hot and fiery, could ever win over the Almighty GOD!

These young boys dared to declare to this tyrant that their GOD was able to deliver them from the fiery furnace.

Their GOD is: more powerful than anyone/anything - ***“I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for Me?”*** Jeremiah 32:27

***“Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.”*** Psalm 91: 1 & 2

***“Yours, Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendour, for everything in heaven and earth is Yours. Yours, Lord, is the kingdom; You are exalted as head over all.”*** 1 Chronicles 29:11

: El Elyon, GOD Most High ***“But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “With raised hand I have sworn an oath to the Lord, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth,”*** Genesis 14: 22

Friends, they did not pivot their loyalty to GOD upon their deliverance. They did not say, as some do, I will serve GOD if it pays me to do so.” NO, they would serve HIM for nothing!!!!

They would not break HIS divine command or themselves idolaters by bowing before an image that has no life in it! Will you?

***“so that you do not become corrupt and make for yourselves an idol, an image of any shape, whether formed like a man or a woman, or like any animal on earth or any bird that flies in the air, or like any creature that moves along the ground or any fish in the waters below. And when you look up to the sky and see the sun, the moon and the stars—all the heavenly array—do not be enticed into bowing down to them and worshipping things the Lord your God has apportioned to all the nations under heaven.”***

Deuteronomy 4: 16 – 19

***““Do not make idols or set up an image or a sacred stone for yourselves, and do not place a carved stone in your land to bow down before it. I am the Lord your God.”*** Leviticus 26: 1

***“All who worship images are put to shame, those who boast in idols - worship HIM, all you gods!”*** Psalms 97: 7

***“Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? You are MY witnesses. Is there any God besides ME? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one.” All who make idols are nothing, and the things they treasure are worthless. Those who would speak up for them are blind; they are ignorant, to their own shame. Who shapes a god and casts an idol, which can profit nothing? People***

**who do that will be put to shame; such craftsmen are only human beings. Let them all come together and take their stand; they will be brought down to terror and shame.”** Isaiah 44: 8 -11

These 3 young men resolved to serve and obey GOD at ANY cost!!!! Will you?

**“I am the Lord; that is MY name! I will not yield MY glory to another or MY praise to idols.”** Isaiah 42: 8

It is a glorious thing when we shun the world and make no calculation of cost, but with the whole of our heart and soul follow The Lamb wherever HE leads us. Revelation 14: 4

“Jesus replied: **“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”**” Matthew 22: 37

What did these 3 young men do? They influenced their age, their people, their captors, and all time!!! They influenced a whole city, and the whole Babylonian Empire!! They influenced a pagan king, the next age, and they still influence many people today who are being tortured for their faith!!!

Their testimony lives on in this audience, and will live in thousands of audiences in days to come!!! They have won the admiration of heaven and earth!!!! The Son of GOD was with them!!!! Daniel 3:25 These 3 young men had the sympathy and admiration of the Son of GOD who left heaven that day to be with them, to come and stand with them, walk with them in the fiery furnace.

### **The Took:**

Nebuchanezzar was a troubler, but GOD troubled him! For HE that made the soul knows well how to deal with it. **“I have been deprived of peace; I have forgotten what prosperity is.”** Lamentations 3:17

Nebuchanezzar had his many strong guards, but they could not guard his heart from distress.

These 3 young men could have rationalized, they could have capitulated and given in as did all the thousands around them, yet they refused to bow down!!!

Has the testimony of these 3 young men impacted you?

Will you abandon this world and its treasures? Will you step out and influence others? Will you watch and pray? Will you be an example to the unsaved? Will you stand against trial and temptation?

Will you follow where The Lamb leads?

The Bible instructs you, choose today whom you will serve. **“But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”** Joshua 24: 15

God says, **“Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor’s crown.”** Revelation 2: 10

Friends, **“neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”** Romans 8: 39

So, Choose Christ!!!! Choose HIM NOW!!!! HE satisfies every longing of our hearts.

Choose HIM today!! It’s Truth or Consequences!!!!

**“Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord.”** Lamentations 3:40

Let us stand against the world and save some souls! Let us stand for Christ and shine out in the darkness! **“In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”** Matthew 5:16

Pray for an evangelist to rise up and reap many salvations.

Maybe I am a fool, but I am praying for the salvation of 5,000 souls! 5,000 souls to come to faith in Christ, here in Pefferlaw and Georgina, or anywhere in North America and Europe. This is what God has placed on my heart.

All I want at the end of my life is to hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

It's all I want for you. Have you heard The Word of The Lord today?

Will HE be able to say to you, "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

Choose today whom you will serve. I choose The LORD Almighty! Will you?

Dare to be different!  
Dare to be a Daniel!!!!

submitted by Pastor Grant Verdoold

Please read the book of Lamentations this week and see if it does not speak to you.

Post Notes on following page.

**Post Notes:**

**Daniel 2: 31 – 45:**

As you, O king, were watching, a great statue appeared. A great and dazzling statue stood before you, and its form was awesome. The head of the statue was pure gold, its chest and arms were silver, its belly and thighs were bronze, its legs were iron, and its feet were part iron and part clay. While you were watching, a stone was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay, and crushed them. Then the iron, clay, bronze, silver, and gold were shattered and became like chaff on the threshing floor in summer. The wind carried them away, and not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that had struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. This was the dream; now we will tell the king its interpretation. You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given sovereignty, power, strength, and glory. Wherever the sons of men or beasts of the field or birds of the air dwell, He has given them into your hand and has made you ruler over them all. You are that head of gold. But after you, there will arise another kingdom, inferior to yours. Next, a third kingdom, one of bronze, will rule the whole earth. Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron; for iron shatters and crushes all things, and like iron that crushes all things, it will shatter and crush all the others. And just as you saw that the feet and toes were made partly of fired clay and partly of iron, so this will be a divided kingdom, yet some of the strength of iron will be in it—just as you saw the iron mixed with clay. And as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so this kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle. As you saw the iron mixed with clay, so the peoples will mix with one another, but will not hold together any more than iron mixes with clay. In the days of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, and this kingdom will not be left to another people. It will shatter all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, but will itself stand forever. And just as you saw a stone cut out of the mountain without human hands, and it shattered the iron, bronze, clay, silver, and gold, so the great God has told the king what will happen in the future. The dream is true, and its interpretation is trustworthy.”

**Daniel 1:11-19:**

Then Daniel said to the steward whom the chief official had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, “Please test your servants for ten days. Let us be given only vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then compare our appearances with those of the young men who are eating the royal food, and deal with your servants according to what you see.” So he consented to this and tested them for ten days. And at the end of ten days, their appearance was better and healthier than all the young men who were eating the king’s food. Thus the steward continued to withhold their choice food and the wine they were to drink, and he gave them vegetables instead. To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding in every kind of literature and wisdom. And Daniel had insight into all kinds of visions and dreams. Now at the end of the time specified by the king, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. And the king spoke with them, and among all the young men he found no one equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. So they entered the king’s service.